



**THE MALAYSIAN CHESS FEDERATION (MCF)**  
Persekutuan Catur Malaysia

# CHESS

## The New Norm

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**Managing Online Chess Tournaments  
Post COVID19 and Beyond**

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**9<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

# Overview

## • Introduction

- Many sporting events including chess, have been impacted due to the global COVID19 pandemic
- With controlled movement enforced, travelling restriction, social distancing, and increasing awareness towards personal hygiene, many are forced to stay indoors
- While banning contact sports and closing arenas or stadiums are done to avoid uncontrolled mass gatherings, a few individual sporting activities with minimal person-to-person contact and limited number of participants allowed, should be able to resume albeit with caution
- The availability of internet can further mitigate the need for participants to congregate at a common place, while the audience can view the event from the comfort of their home.
- A properly documented SOP that is crafted to suit each sporting activity can provide the opportunity for certain sports to continue at its almost business as usual
- Leveraging on the power of internet as the new platform for players to match their wits, chess is one of the sports that has the potential to adapt to this new norm without losing its gaming values and environment, and its quality of play.



## • Problem Statement

- While online chess maybe the new way to play chess, how do we manage and control players from cheating using a chess computers and getting away with it?
- In order to minimize cheating, players need to be observed and monitored by a qualified Arbiter/Officials - how can this be done if they are at home? Is it enough for a webcam to catch a player in "action"?
- Chess tournaments is usually organized within enclosed area like rooms or halls - how can the organizer enforce crowd control and social distancing for the players, officials and audiences?
- How can the organizer minimize the risk of players getting infected?
- While an event can still be organized for a small crowd between 6 and 10 players, what can be done to increase the number of participants in order to run an attractive, competitive and exciting tournament?
- How do the organizer manage inter state travelling from outstation players?
- How does the sports body maintain the game quality and event management?





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# The Proposed Solution

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The proposed solution is to provide a hybrid tournament organizing model that **combines ONLINE CHESS and REAL TIME EVENT MANAGEMENT** in ensuring that

- **health and safety** measures can be enforced at all times
- **integrity and quality** of the sport is maintained
- **optimizes and reduces** cost for players and organizers
- aligns with **current technology trending** i.e. IR4.0 and IOT
- enhances and improves **resources and networking** capabilities

# Concept and Idea

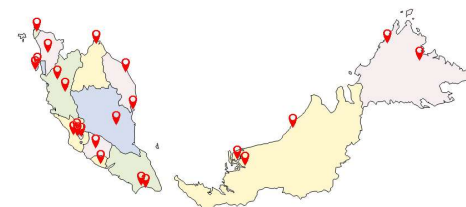
- 1** Chess is to be played online via internet



- 3** Appoint one Arbiter/Official per each satellite venue to oversee and monitor the running of the event



- 2** Fragmentize the tournament venues by appointing academies or schools as a satellite venue to disperse the crowd and avoid interstate travelling



- 5** Provide additional Rules and Regulations as addendum to the current Laws of Chess, and outline the Roles and Responsibilities of the command centre, satellite venues, audiences, players and arbiters



- 4** Appoint a command centre as a hub for results reporting and venue monitoring.



# 1. Online Chess



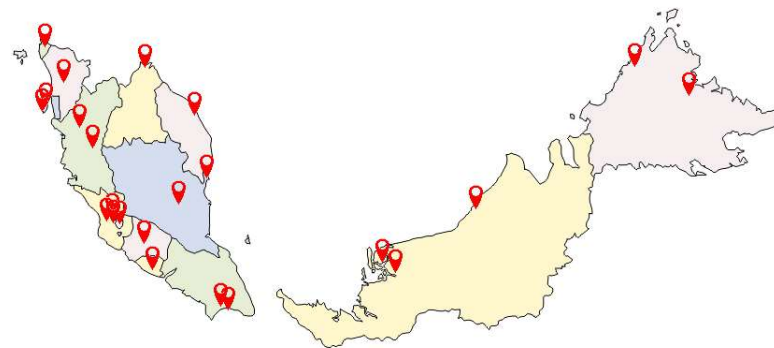
- All games to be played online
- Players will bring their own laptop (with webcam) which will be checked by the Arbiter to ensure that there is no chess engine or databases installed on the laptop
- Players will be paired by a Pairing Arbiter (at the command centre) and the pairing will be published in chess-results.com. From here on, the white player will invite the black player via chess.com to accept the challenge
- Players will still need records their moves as per normal game
- All results to be submitted to the command centre via email and attaching a recorded game copy in .pgn format
- Player shall have only their laptop, mouse and scoresheet on the table. As per any normal chess game, players are not allowed to have their mobile phone while playing.
- Players caught cheating shall lose immediately and barred from continuing in the event.



## 2. Satellite Centres



- A satellite centre must be able to accommodate between 15 and 20 players based on the following guidelines:
  - One player per table (1 meter apart) to accommodate a laptop, and scoresheet
  - Center to have attached toilet/restrooms, pantry or common rest area and praying area
  - A single point of entry and exit
- A satellite centres must have internet connection, with at least a desktop, webcam at the playing area, printer and scanner, and a UPS system to sustain power in case of a power failure
- A satellite centres must have a dedicated contact person for emergency purposes, and appoint one(1) arbiter (NA or higher) to assist the Chief Arbiter (to be appointed by MCF)
- Each satellite centres to conduct the following safety measures:
  - Sanitize the centre before the start and at the end of each tournament day
  - Temperature scan and registering everyone before entering the centre
  - Provide hand sanitizers at the main entrance and various points within the center
  - And provide a list of nearby clinics or hospitals for quick reference



## 3. Chief Arbiter's Role



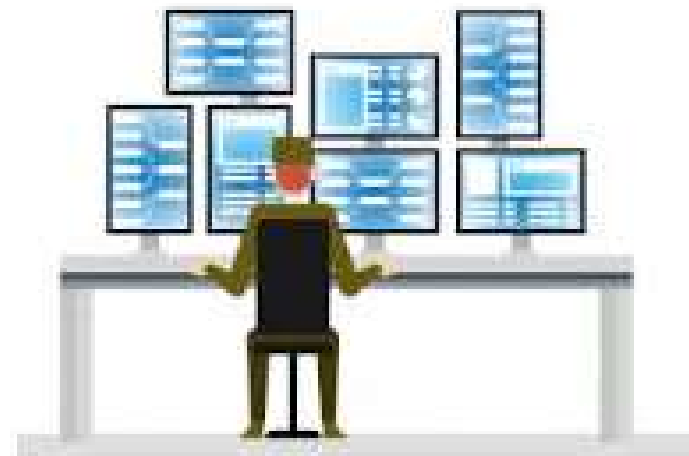
- Chief Arbiter/Arbiter must ensure that
  - All SOP, Rules & Regulations, Laws of Chess, etc, are adhered by everyone
  - All players laptops do not contain suspicious application or devices
  - All players are at their designated seat and logged in 5 minutes before the round starts
  - All players signed, download, submit and report their scores accordingly
  - All players to disconnect, and leave tournament area after game concludes
- If two players from the same centre are paired to play together, they will still need to play their game via online mode. Over-the-board play is strictly NOT allowed
- Chief Arbiter can request (or eject) a player for the hall if the player:
  - Is ill or showing signs of being ill i.e. coughing, feverish, sneezing, runny nose, etc
  - Is cheating or attempting to cheat
  - Is disrupting or distracting other players in the tournament hall
  - Is not complying with the tournament's SOP, Rules and Regulations
  - Any other behaviour deemed unsuitable that may affect or impact the wellbeing of any of the participants, official or audiences at the centre



## 4. Centralized Hub



- To accept all results from all satellite centres
- To manage and complete the pairing and publish the necessary on chess-results.com
- To monitor via zoom application the conduct of all players, arbiters at the various satellite centres
- To ensure that the SOP and Rules and Regulations are followed by all satellite centres
- To flag any suspicious behaviour or incidences to the respective satellite centres
- In extreme case, the Arbiter at the command centre may take a drastic action to disqualify a satellite centre that does not adhere to the SOP and Rules and Regulations, or if the arbiter in the centre is not performing his duties as expected or required
- To tabulate, announce and share the final score with all the players, officials and satellite centres via zoom application followed by email and whatsapp
- To disburse all prize fund to all the players via online banking transfer once the event has concluded
- To ensure that the tournament is being managed professionally and efficiently by all involved



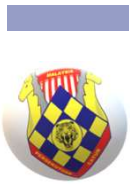


## 5. Standard Operating Procedures (Partial)



- Players will register at their nearest or preferred centre. Each centre can accept no more than 20 players depending on their floor size. Once a centre is full, player must register at a different centre.
- MCF/ Organizer will settle the agreed rental of the center (during the event), the payment for the Chief Arbiter, and the prize fund, and other agreed payment agreed - if any, before the event starts.
- In the event of a power failure at one of the center, the following rule shall apply:
  - The arbiter can allow players to connect using their mobile phone as a modem and continue to be allowed even after the power or internet connection resumes to minimize disruption.
  - Player is responsible for their laptop battery and condition. If a player experience laptop failure, he/she is considered to have lost the game. The player can use a backup/borrowed laptop to continue provided the computer has been checked and approved by Arbiter.
  - If during the effort of reconnecting, the game server disqualifies the player, or the player timed out, he/she is considered to have lost the game
  - In general, MCF will not be responsible for any internet/power failure experienced by the player/center.
  - In the event of a major power/server reset that is impacting more than 75% of all players involved, the rounds may be considered null and void, and all the games will be replayed from the start with a shorter time control in order not to disrupt the game schedule.
- MCF/ Organizer will settle the agreed rental of the center (during the event), the payment for the Chief Arbiter, and the prize fund, and other agreed payment agreed - if any, before the event starts.
- The SOP mentioned herewith IS NOT THE COMPLETE VERSION, In any event, MCF reserves the right to amend, add, change, delete or otherwise rewrite and reintroduce the SOP as it deemed fit without providing any notices





# Conclusion

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With COVID19 pandemic expected to continue beyond 2020, chess entities around the world must find new ways to ensure that chess can be played competitively while preserving its quality and standards of play

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Chess is one of the few activities that can transit from an "over-the-board" game onto an "online" game without losing its intensity, competitiveness, playing value, mode of play and players control

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While blitz and rapid chess are frequently contested via online, standard classical chess has been sidelines due to the inability of the event organizers to control and minimize cheating opportunities by the participants

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This proposal is to manage and provide a realistic solution that balances the requirement of social distancing, avoiding mass gathering and overcome travelling restriction in order to continue promoting a competitive and quality mode of play

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At the same time, it provides opportunities to reduce cost for organizers and players, increase events management efficiency while at the same time, eliminates the risk of cheating by players.

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With the proposed NEW NORM for Chess, and a new option for chess to be played via online, chess can take advantage of the situation and be a game that is virtually exhilarating and realistically challenging in both the virtual domain and the real world

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# Thank You

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